

NOTES ON MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

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The Joseph Nathan Ulman Collection

TRADITIONALLY the strengths of the Maryland Historical Society's manuscript holdings have been in colonial and nineteenth century material. Prospective donors of twentieth century manuscripts have either not wanted to part with relatively recent items or felt their documents were too modern to be valuable or of interest to a historical society. We are trying to dispel this view—twentieth century history is a vibrant, mushrooming field, and the Society is deeply interested in collecting relevant correspondence, business records and diaries.

A giant step toward strengthening our holdings in twentieth century manuscripts was made possible earlier this year through the generous donation of the Joseph Nathan Ulman Collection (MS. 1914) by his children, Elinor Ulman and Joseph N. Ulman, Jr. Joseph N. Ulman (1878-1943) was an outstanding Baltimorean, a progressive judge of the Supreme Bench of Baltimore from 1924 until his death, a man vitally concerned with and involved in social, racial, and penological problems. This very detailed and complete collection gives through personal and business correspondence, case records, articles and speeches a fascinating picture of a compassionate and tireless champion of prisoners, blacks, and misguided youths.

Joseph N. Ulman spent his entire life in the city of his birth, Baltimore. He attended public schools, the Johns Hopkins University, and after receiving a Master of Arts and a law degree from Columbia, returned to Baltimore as a practicing attorney in 1901. His career as a corporate lawyer flourished but Joseph Ulman did not feel fulfilled. His deep concern about social injustice was heightened by the cases he was asked to argue for corporations against employees. Mr. Ulman gave vent to his social concerns during his leisure hours, filling posts on committees and organizations too numerous to list fully. Over the years he was president of a local settlement house, president of the Hebrew Benevolent Society, treasurer of a state institution for delinquents, president of the Prisoners Aid Association, president of the Baltimore Urban League and later a member of its national board. He was chairman of the Prison Industries Reorganization Administration, director of the National Probation Association, and director of the Legal Aid Bureau of Baltimore. To cap his career he was appointed to the American Law Institute and made a member of the committee which dealt with juvenile delinquents.

In 1924 Joseph Ulman was appointed to the Supreme Bench of Balti-



Judge Joseph Nathan Ulman (1878-1943). *Maryland Historical Society.*

more—and it was here on the criminal court that he felt the greatest opportunity to apply his humanitarian, progressive concepts. In 1933 he wrote *A Judge Takes the Stand* which explained the processes of law for laymen and exemplified his views. Its popularity and his stature as a reform judge soon meant that he was contributing articles and book reviews to popular magazines like the *American Mercury* as well as legal and sociological journals. Judge Ulman became a sought after speaker for professional conferences, colleges, and civic groups.

To him, one of his greatest projects was the development of a probation system and a new interpretation of penology. Judge Ulman once summarized his view: "punishment as the mainspring of social action simply does not work. Instead we emphasize training and treatment. . . . We want a system in which individualization of treatment will be the keynote, the rehabilitation of the prisoner a primary aim, the protection of society the ultimate objective."

The extensive Ulman Collection in twenty-eight boxes gives a full picture of this public-spirited man and his times. Through his energetic, personable letters Joseph Ulman comes to life as he exuberantly describes a walk along alpine trails in Switzerland, defends his views about Zionism, discusses the widely publicized Duker case and the furor over capital punishment it aroused, or writes wistfully to his wife and children vacationing in Maine while he tends to his legal duties in sweltering Baltimore.

The record of Joseph Ulman's life and work, now housed at the Society, is full and complete. It begins with one of his early school composition books, written, it is carefully recorded, at age nine. His college career is well represented—there is a scrapbook of his Hopkins days, and nearly a dozen themes and addresses. Joseph Ulman's legal and judicial career is perhaps the most fully documented part of the collection. There are scrapbooks—one on his appointment and reappointments to the Supreme Bench and the congratulations that attended them, one on the controversial Duker case and the correspondence and newspaper articles it generated—and bound volumes of a rate case that was argued from the Public Service Commission to the Supreme Court. An outstanding part of the legal record is a forty volume set of notebooks detailing the cases tried before the Judge from 1924 to 1942. These manuscript books include a brief description of each case, witnesses's testimony, points of law, and verdict.

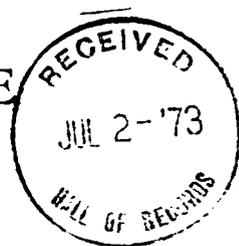
The next longest section of the collection—and it is fitting that it is extensive—concerns Joseph Ulman's reform interests. Included here are copies of his numerous articles, speeches, committee reports, newsclippings, a typescript of his book, *A Judge Takes the Stand*, and three scrapbooks of correspondence about the book and reviews.

There are two boxes of family correspondence—a large group written on two vacation trips to Europe, and letters to his family when they were in Maine and he in Baltimore—and one box of assorted business letters. Much of his professional correspondence is bound in various letterbooks and scrapbooks elsewhere in the collection.

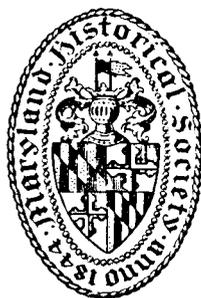
The Ulman papers continue after the Judge's untimely death in 1943. There are several scrapbooks of obituary notices, letters of condolence, and Mrs. Ulman's correspondence. Of special interest too are the scrapbooks and correspondence of the Ulman Foundation, Inc., formed in 1944 to advance the work and reforms Judge Ulman championed.

The donors presented as well a large collection of photographs, two phonograph records of Joseph Ulman's voice, his gavel and other mementos. The comprehensive record of a prominent judge's professional career and civic and social concerns has been carefully preserved, generously donated to the Society, and thereby made available to scholars. The Joseph Nathan Ulman Collection offers students of sociology and twentieth century history a rich field for research and hopefully will inspire others to give their "modern" manuscripts to the Society.

MARYLAND
HISTORICAL MAGAZINE



PUBLISHED BY
THE MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



VOLUME LXVII

BALTIMORE

1972